

Giant cable companies should not be permitted to grow larger. NO, NO, NO, NO and NO again. NO. Further consolidation in the cable industry is a clear violation of horizontal ownership rules that must be re-established to serve the public interest.

It's already bad enough. Since passage of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 and the "deregulation" of cable, consumers have seen their rates jump an average of 59 percent — with some areas experiencing even more dramatic increases. And to make matters worse, we are required to buy channels we don't want or need because the cable operators bundle them together. Many of these are packed full of stupid programming that anyone with a brain cell or two would channel-surf right over, as we do. All we care about are CNN, MSNBC, Charlie Rose, BBC America, and selected film channels, including particularly the IFC (at least someone still has an independent mind out there).

But we are forced to pay for crap like Sunday School Central or whaddever the so-called "Christian" channels are (christians who believe that jesus thinks the iraq war is cool and that george bush should tell me when to get knocked up, so whaddever), or FOX news... as IF I would ever in any state other than delirium turn on that #%\$%^\$. But here i am paying for it... it makes me ABSOLUTELY FURIOUS.

Moreover, the quality of customer service often reflects the fact that cable television is not a competitive market. I won't elaborate because I bet you have cable service and I bet you think it sucks. Unless you are braindead enough to actually \*like\* the stupid, mindless palaver they call programming, in which case our problems are far more severe than previously suspected.

\*I'm \* still ok -- I have a nice professorial job at an Ivy League institution and I can pay for it, and I read nine languages and speak four fluently, and I can [still...] visit foreign press sites to my heart's content on the internet and read whatever I want. Most americans, however, are not so fortunate; nor are they so fortunate to live in a town like Ithaca, New York... where there is Room for All Views, to rather clumsily co-opt the title of the fabulous flick. Lost you?... never mind, you probably didn't see it, you were watching Fox News instead.

But the cost of cable modem service remains out of reach for many households. The result is that cable companies consistently and selectively underserve rural and low-income Americans. The American people are watching the digital divide widen even as the need for access to high-speed networks increases.

More crucially, as a result, in many communities, the truly independent sources of local news, information and culture come from the public channels produced at the local access centers. Unfortunately, local channels lack the resources to produce the programming that citizens want and need because of people like Tomlinson, etc., etc., etc., etc., ad nauseum.... One would be tempted to think that you guys want to further raise what is already a mindboggling level of disinformation and ignorance among these populations (most people are good people, and if they get both sides about the `Iraq war or about Karl Rove, that will at least jolt their brains out of slumber mode, allowing them think about it for themselves and at least be aware that there is a sane, coherent option to being a right wingnut, even if in the end they decide to remain one... but you people are -- not very subtly, btw -- attempting to join together with the bushites and make sure this does not happen. this is unconstitutional, not to mention unconscionable).

The last thing we need is to reward the anti-competitive actions of cable giants by permitting greater consolidation in ownership, reducing competition, and encouraging more of the same. And the last thing we need is more of a pipeline straight from Scott McClellan's mouth into my living room (ugh, what a thought -- i am a professor of art history and thus a very visual person, and that is NOT an image i wish to carry around with me... actually, our tv is in the bedroom, so that is 10,000 times more horrifying... not to mention the fact that W has been trying to get in there for the past 5 years... is that a woman or a man in bed beside me?...squint harder, W, and maybe you'll figure it out...) through some cable conglomerate that evenly divides its bootlicking between W, the NRA, the pentagon, corporate creeps and Pat Robertson (eeuuuuuuwwwwww, I have GOT to stop making these things up).

If Comcast and Time Warner are allowed to merge with Adelphia, the two companies will control nearly 50 percent of the national market.

**UNLESS YOU INTEND TO CARRY 'DEMOCRACY NOW' AND ITS HOSTS THE**

FABOLOUS AMY GOODMAN AND JUAN GONZALEZ ON THE SAME TARNISHED  
AND SLIMY TRAY YOU USE TO CART MEMBERS OF THE BUSH  
ADMINISTRATION RIGHT INTO THE LIVINGROOMS OF MR. AND MRS.  
REDSTATE AND THEIR KIDS, THEN THIS IS UNETHICAL. AND YOU KNOW IT.